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News and Views

from the Farm Management Staff

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
FEDERAL EXTENSION SERVICE
Division of Agricultural Economics Programs
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Dear Farm Management Workers:

1962 FEED GRAIN PROGRAM

As you know, the sign-up period for the 1962 feed grain and barley programs is February 5-March 30. This will give farmers more time than they had last year to figure how participation would fit into their total farm businesses. But if you and your county agents are to provide them, early in the sign-up period, with educational help in making their choices, there is little time to spare.

Variety of Approaches

We are enclosing copies of budget forms used by 10 State extension services in last year's feed grain program. They were chosen from materials sent us by 29 States. We selected these particular 10 forms to illustrate the range in ideas and approaches used. Each, of course, is uniquely useful to farmers in certain situations. In most cases there were explanations, instructions, comment, or example calculations with the budget forms. We generally omitted those.

We are sending you these samples of last year's work with the thought that they may be useful to you in providing your county agents and farmers with helpful educational materials this year.

We will soon send you copies of a USDA fact sheet about the 1962 programs and a suggested mailer, containing budget forms, prepared here in FES. You may want to adapt the mailer for use in your State. If so, the State materials enclosed may give you some ideas for doing so.

Opportunity to Teach Farm Management

The choices farmers have in the feed grain programs seem to offer us, as extension farm management specialists, an excellent opportunity to teach some specific lessons in farm management to large numbers of farmers. This opportunity stems from the fact that many farmers will be motivated to budget on paper the possibilities the program offers them. Rarely is there an opportunity to get as many farmers to use budgets in making practical, specific choices.

There is also an unusual opportunity to teach some basic economic concepts and principles and their uses in managing a farm. Seldom is there an opportunity to teach as many farmers the long- and short-run applications of the concept of fixed vs. variable cost and its corollaries. The same may be said of the marginal concepts and, in some farming situations, the concepts of risk.

You may want to prepare and use feed grain program materials in your State in such a way as to capitalize on these opportunities to teach fundamental lessons in farm management, as well as to assist in making better choices about the feed grain programs.

Sincerely yours,

Buel Lanpher.

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Enclosures